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ABSTRACT

The Reading Center at Lakewood High School has several major components: a developmental reading program, a remedial program, a program of reading for new Americans, and the inservice training of teachers. Each of these components is briefly described. (AA)

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THE ROLE OF THE READING CENTER IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL

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The curricula of our secondary schools have usually been in a process of change. There is ample evidence of print materials advocating the need of equal opportunity for all students. But not enough is being written about the role of reading at the secondary school in achieving this goal. Indeed, one of the most important outcomes of education is learning how to learn. There is no more important element in reaching this goal than improving reading skills and attitudes.

During the past few years a number of secondary schools have included reading programs in their curriculum offerings. These school administrators are aware that the elementary schools cannot be made to do the whole job in reading. Reading is continuous process. Continuation in the development of reading skills is a part of every study situation. There can be no place where one may say the task is complete, the skill is mastered.

The Reading Center services are available to students and teachers at Lakewood High School. In order to minimize the possibility of having students hesitant to use the facilities of the Center for fear that doing so might carry a stigma, there are periods for the college bound students. Others in need of remediation attach no stigma to assignment in the course.

The instruction is designed to help the student become a better reader of all kinds of material and, therefore, a better student in all subjects requiring reading. The course stresses variable reading rates, comprehension, vocabulary, study habits, and methods for concentration and memory.

There are several major components of the Lakewood High Reading program: (1) the developmental reading program; (2) the remedial program; (3) the program of reading for new Americans; (4) the in-service training for teachers.

The developmental program is designed for the average and above

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average or college bound student. This program is designed to extend and refine the existing reading skills possessed by the student. Materials used include fiction, non-fiction, workbooks, programmed materials, texts, tapes, filmstrips, tachistoscopic devices, tachomatic 500 training films and self-made teacher materials. No credit is given and the course is on a voluntary basis with the student reporting from study hall time or self-direct (free) time.

The remedial program is offered on a voluntary basis and also on a referral basis from the school counselors. In addition there is a cooperative program with the English Department. The ninth grade students scheduled into basic English classes are involved with the services of the Reading Center.

The unique aspect of the remedial program is that it forms the basis of a complete instructional technique designed to meet the needs of those students whose disabilities are properly diagnosed, and a program is outlined for each student in the Reading Center.

The program for new Americans is a relatively new one at Lakewood High School. There are presently twenty-eight students representing eighteen different languages in the program. These are secondary school age students who have moved to our community and speak little if any English. An English teacher supervises this program to aid these young people learn and use the rudiments of our language.

The last phase of the Lakewood High School reading program is the in-service workshop for teachers. Our goal is every teacher a teacher of reading. All teachers at the High School are offered the opportunity to enroll in the Lakewood Board of Education sponsored Reading Workshop. The classes are held in the Reading Center, one afternoon per week, 4 to 6 P.M. for 15 sessions.

The purpose of the course is to aid teachers of content subject area to have an understanding of the reading process so that a more effective job of teaching would occur in the classroom.

The topics developed during the Workshop are: Nature and Process of Reading; Assessment of Print Materials; Assessment of Student Groups; Vocabulary in the Content Area; Comprehension in the Content Area; Directed Reading Lesson; Media and Learning; Motivating the Reluctant Reader; Teaching Content Through Reading.

The role of the Reading Center in the modern secondary school is a vital one, serving all aspects of the curriculum. Reading and study skills are basic to the educational process. They are the foundations on which all education is built. A deficiency in reading or study skills sentences the student either to undue hardship or outright failure.